

Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve

CITIZEN AIRMAN

Vol 67 No. 2 April 2015

www.afrc.af.mil



Resurrecting the

GHOST RIDER

Total Force team takes B-52
from the 'Boneyard' to Barksdale.

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LEUTENANT GENERAL
James F. Jackson
 ★★ ★
 FROM THE TOP



A HEDGE AGAINST UNCERTAINTY

Each year I provide a written testimony to Congress on behalf of the Air Force Reserve. This testimony explains where we are and where we would like to go in the future. This month I want to share with you some highlights included in this year's statement.

As most of you know, the Air Force Reserve provides integrated and flexible operational capability to combatant commanders worldwide. We are part of every Air Force core mission function and perform the same missions as our active-duty partners, with the exception of U-2 reconnaissance and intercontinental ballistic missile missions. Last year our Citizen Airmen completed almost 500,000 man-days in support of Department of Defense requirements and filled more than 4,000 deployed air expeditionary force taskings. On any given day, there are approximately 5,000 of you mobilized and serving globally.

This past year you also "deployed at home" as remotely piloted aircraft crews and maintainers, space operators, cyber warriors, and intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance experts. In 2014, our RPA crews flew more than 18,000 sorties and provided over 40,000 combat support hours. The 655th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group provided a total of 82,530 hours of ISR support to our Total Force Integration partners. The Air Force Reserve handled between 20 percent and 40 percent of the daily operational

mission load across all space missions. You provided crucial continuity and surge capacity for critical Air Force missions.

It is imperative that we continue to look to the future to ensure we maintain a combat-ready and viable force. Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James and Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III have both testified about the important role the Reserve will play in the future of the three-component Air Force, along with our active-duty and Air National Guard counterparts. Our Air Force Reserve continues to focus on the four key areas of mission, manpower, modernization and military construction. Focusing our efforts allows us to ensure we are ready to provide daily operational capability, strategic depth and surge capacity to our nation. We are an effective and efficient way to retain experience and maintain capacity for our Air Force.

We must continue to balance the demands of today with the challenges of tomorrow. We will focus on preparing for an uncertain and fast-paced future. Our job is to continually evolve to meet the needs of the nation. I agree with Secretary James when she stated, "I would expect that we will come up with additional missions, additional capabilities, that we would ask our Guard and Reserve to assume in the future." It makes sense to grow in areas where we can leverage your deep experience, both military and civilian.

You provide critical capabilities and indispensable capacity to the Total Force team. The Air Force Reserve remains an integrated, flexible and combat-ready force capable of supporting our national security objectives. You stand ready as a hedge against uncertainty, protecting this great nation from the threats of today and tomorrow. Thanks for all you do!

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT
Cameron B. Kirksey
 CHIEF'S VIEW

DEVELOPING OUR AIRMEN

One of my goals as your chief is to mentor and grow our enlisted force. I understand that our force is only as strong as the men and women who volunteer to serve. Our goal in the Air Force Reserve is to provide opportunities to strengthen the force and develop our enlisted Airmen.

This month, I want to highlight some of the changes going on across the command in terms of implementing the Enlisted Evaluation System and make sure you understand the current enlisted force development process.

As many of you have probably heard, the Air Force and Air Force Reserve are implementing a new Enlisted Evaluation System. The goal of the new system is to ensure job performance is the primary focus when it comes to promotions. This article provides you the highlights, but I encourage you to reach out to your local force support squadron for additional information and guidance.

So what does this new system mean for you? Individual Reservists and participating individual ready Reservists, including air reserve technicians, will continue to receive reports every two years, and active Guard and Reserve members will continue to receive annual reports. People of all ranks, from senior airman

with 20 months' time in service through chief master sergeant, will experience a migration from their current evaluation period to the static closeout dates based on rank, according to the implementation schedule.

The philosophy behind this change is to build an easier, more predictable evaluation program based on the grade of the individual, rather than his or her independent evaluation timeframe. The static closeout dates will ensure all members in the same grade have the same evaluation period and closeout date. The Air Force Reserve will use the evaluation promotion recommendation area to capture an Airman's performance and future potential.

Our enlisted force development remains a top priority for us. To accomplish this, we have established developmental teams to help us identify, develop and grow our enlisted force. Our functional development teams meet on a bi-annual schedule to provide functional developmental feedback and identify key personnel within their respective career fields.

My office, in conjunction with the Directorate of Manpower, Personnel and Services' Force Development Branch and Air Reserve Personnel Center, conducts a command-level E-8/9 development team annually

during the month of May. The main purpose of this DT is to provide developmental feedback and produce a list of qualified candidates for key/strategic senior leadership positions within the Air Force Reserve and nominative positions within the Air Force.

It is critical for you to be actively involved in the process and keep your Reserve Enlisted Development Plan current and updated annually so you are ready for these development opportunities. These boards also allow senior leaders the opportunity to assess the development of the enlisted corps and help us shape the future of the Air Force Reserve.

In addition, we have an Enlisted Developmental Education Board that meets each year during the month of May. This board selects Citizen Airmen in the grades of E-6 through E-9 for key developmental educational opportunities and joint courses. It competitively selects applicants determined to be exceptionally qualified based upon the whole-person concept and senior-rater input.

As always, we recognize that our Airmen are the cornerstone of our force. Talking about the new enlisted evaluation system, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody stated, "We have always said that performance counts, and, objectively, now you are going to see it." With your help, we can develop senior enlisted leaders who are ready to meet the needs of our Air Force today and tomorrow. Remember, I'm here for you!



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On the cover: Maintenance technicians prepare a B-52 Stratofortress known as "Ghost Rider" for an early-morning taxi test at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The test ensured that after sitting idle in storage for almost seven years in the Arizona desert, the aircraft could be safely controlled down the runway. Ghost Rider is being returned to active duty. See the story on Page 20. (Master Sgt. Greg Steele)

Two F-15E Strike Eagles from the 4th Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, on their way to Nellis AFB, Nevada, to support Red Flag 15-1, wait to receive fuel from a KC-135R Stratotanker belonging to the Air Force Reserve's 916th Air Refueling Squadron, also from Seymour Johnson. The exercise featured aircraft from 21 different Air Force squadrons and offered realistic combat training involving the air, space and cyber forces of the United States and its allies. (Airman 1st Class Aaron J. Jenne)

On the back cover: Pararescue jumpers and combat rescue officers from the 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, conduct search-and-rescue response during flood training in Perry, Georgia. For more on the 920th's realistic four-day training exercise, see Page 14. (Staff Sgt. Kelly Goonan)

Gen. Mark A. Welsh III *Chief of Staff, United States Air Force*
Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson *Commander, Air Force Reserve Command*
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Citizen Airman magazine (ISSN No. 0887-9680) is published bi-monthly by Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command Office of Public Affairs for the commander of Air Force Reserve Command. Periodical postage paid at Warner Robins, Ga., and additional mailing offices. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to the homes of all Reservists. Content is normally news articles and features developed for release to commercial media as part of the Air Force Reserve's continuing public affairs program. Opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Air Force Reserve. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated. Readers-per-copy ratio: 4-1.

Send inquiries and submissions to HQ AFRC/PAP, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661. Or, email them to afrc.pap@us.af.mil. For questions about the magazine or its contents, you can call (478) 327-1770 or DSN 497-1770.

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POSTMASTER: Please send all Forms 3579 to *Citizen Airman*, HQ AFRC/PAP, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661.

Members of the Junior ROTC program at Colonial High School in Orlando get a tour of the flight deck of an HC-130P/N King aircraft while visiting the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida. The aircraft is used as part of the 920th's personnel recovery mission, and it provides air-to-air refueling for the wing's fleet of HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters. (Master Sgt. Paul Flipse)



Staff Sgt. Daniel Michael, aerospace ground equipment craftsman assigned to the 403rd Maintenance Squadron, adjusts the governor actuator on a generator at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. The AGE shop is responsible for the maintenance and repair of all ground equipment assigned to the 403rd Wing.



Two C-5M Super Galaxies assigned to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, sit on Alaska's Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson flight line in January. Team Dover Airmen were preparing to airlift three HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters and nearly 100 people of the Alaska Air National Guard to the Horn of Africa for rescue and maintenance missions. (Lt. Col. Candis Olmstead)





Master Sgt. Chet Nance, 434th Security Forces Squadron combat arms noncommissioned officer in charge, inspects an M4 rifle at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana. Grissom's combat arms instructors are responsible for inspections and repairs of approximately 1,600 weapons. (Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota)



Second Lt. Deborah Hautanen low crawls through an obstacle event as part of the Women's History Month Warrior Challenge at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. Hautanen is one of five Reservists who represented the 512th Airlift Wing for the event. (Capt. Bernie Kale)



Sgt. 1st Class Jon Ewald, tandem instructor with the U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team, and Maj. Brooke Cortez, 482nd Fighter Wing public affairs chief, conduct a tandem jump high over Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida. The Golden Knights are conducting their sixth straight year of winter training at Homestead. (Army Sgt. Trey Martin)

Members of the 934th Airlift Wing staff perform a retreat ceremony during a unit training assembly at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minnesota. (Shannon McKay)



Tech Sgt. Vincent Hawkins, a crew chief with the 403rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, inspects a C-130J Hercules at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. (Master Sgt. Brian Lamar)



McConnell Pilots Prep for Arrival of New Tanker Aircraft

The KC-46A Pegasus isn't slated to arrive at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, until the summer of 2016, but the Reserve pilots of the 18th Air Refueling Squadron are already preparing for the new airframe by beginning their receiver/tanker training.

Unlike some KC-135 Stratotankers, the KC-46 has the ability to take on fuel while in flight. The first Reserve pilots who will fly the KC-46 are required to be R/T qualified on specially modified KC-135s before they can even begin the required training at the Boeing Flight Training Facility in Seattle. Fortunately, the 18th ARS has been actively working with members of the active-duty 22nd Air Refueling Wing at McConnell to ensure its pilots are R/T certified before they attend KC-46 training in Seattle next May.

Though Reservists currently have limited time to train compared to their active-duty counterparts, Capt. Chris Markley, 18th ARS pilot and one of the first within his squadron to begin R/T training, hopes that this training will continue to strengthen the Total Force relationship at McConnell. Eventually, having both active-duty and Reserve instructors will provide improved continuity of training for all pilots participating in R/T training.

Maj. Chase Crosby, an 18th ARS pilot who was R/T qualified before switching from the active duty to the Reserve last year and who now serves as an R/T instructor pilot, said once pilots perform the simulation training, they learn how to take gas from a KC-135 and a KC-10 Extender. To do this, the pilots must keep the aircraft steady while staying in close contact with the refueler. The goal for the pilots is to complete this action for 10 minutes on autopilot and then five minutes without the autopilot.

Markley is one of six pilots from the 931st Air Refueling Group who have been selected to fly the KC-46 during initial operations testing and evaluation. He has already experienced firsthand some of the challenges associated with learning to take on fuel while in flight.

"As tanker pilots, we tend to have only half the picture, but [piloting] as a receiver gives you a bigger picture, making you a better tanker pilot overall," he said.

Despite these challenges, Markley says he enjoys his training.

"[Flying as a receiver] has its own unique set of challenges that I've never experienced in the KC-135, but it's really fun," he said.

The initial operations testing and evaluation for aircrews from the 18th ARS is scheduled to take place at McConnell late in the summer 2016. The KC-46 is projected to arrive at the base in August 2016. *(Tech. Sgt. Abigail Klein, 931st ARG public affairs)*

Volunteers Step Up to Help Airmen, Families Stay Mentally Fit

The 301st Fighter Wing at Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas, recently added to its resources available to support its Comprehensive Airman Fitness Program.

Eight Airmen and one key spouse mentor completed a three-day course to become resiliency training assistants and are now available to help Reservists and their families strengthen their mental well-being.

Emphasizing the wingman concept of Airmen and families taking care of themselves and each other, RTAs accomplish their mission by providing resources to units to build a more resilient force; equipping leadership with the most recent Air Force resiliency guidance; conducting unit-level training on all skills; and assisting master resilience trainers during large training events such as Wingman Day.

Laura Loftin, director of psychological health for the 301st FW and a master resilience trainer, described the course as three days of intense training covering 11 different areas such as physical and spiritual resilience as well as interpersonal problem-solving skills.

"The training class was the best I have ever taken in the military," said Senior Master Sgt. Angela Rabel, a new RTA and 301st Medical Squadron health administration superintendent. "It was thorough and very valuable in equipping us to take the skills back to our particular units to share. These tools are so simple, yet strategic, in helping all Airmen, regardless of rank, become aware of how and why they should manage their lives in ways that build their resilience."

The Air Force chief of staff and chief master sergeant of the Air Force both identified resilience as one of the top Air Force readiness issues due to high operations tempo, persistent suicide rates and self-defeating behaviors. In 2011, the Air Force created the Comprehensive Airman Fitness Program.

"Our job is to fight and win the nation's wars," said Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III. "We'll never be good enough at it; we've got to get better every day. It's not an easy task, which is why Comprehensive Airman Fitness is so important. Our focus is on the well-being and care for ourselves, each other and our families so we can be more resilient to the many challenges military service brings." *(Master Sgt. Julie Briden-Garcia, 301st FW public affairs)*

Construction Project Improves Maintenance Operations

Maintenance technicians in the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, are now able to do their jobs on the unit's refueling aircraft without having to worry about outside weather conditions.

Thanks to a recent renovation/expansion project, the organization's fixed-wing aircraft isochronal inspection hangar is now big enough to fully enclose the HC-130P/N King aircraft, allowing maintainers to perform maintenance operations during all types of weather conditions.

Prior to the project, which added 10,000 square feet to the 17,000-square-foot hangar, the building was only big enough to accommodate the tail section of the C-130 airframe upon which the HC-130P/N is built. The enlarged hangar also will reduce corrosion problems for the aircraft caused by the salt air environment.

In addition to the expansion, repairs were made to the building's exterior, the interior was painted, and repairs were made to the fire protection system. Improvements included installation of a 100,000-gallon water tank to supply the fire-protection system, installation of a 30,000-gallon underground containment tank for firefighting foam, installation of a bridge crane, replacement of high-bay light fixtures, installation of fire protection and alarm systems, renovations to existing fire pumps, coating and painting the hangar floor, and other general architectural work (kitchens, offices and break rooms).

Equipment required to fully outfit the hangar as an isochronal inspection dock included maintenance platforms (\$1.5 million), a landing gear removal and replacement tool (\$70,000), and heavy-duty tool boxes designed to house the array of tools required to perform ISO inspections (\$50,000).

An Air Force ISO inspection is a thorough examination of an entire aircraft, during which maintainers look for and repair problems in every system — from nose to tail and wingtip to wingtip. *(920th RQW public affairs)*

Truck Driver Training Course Earns Certification

After 18 months of determination and hard work, an organization at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, has reached the gold standard for training in the truck driving world.

In January, with the graduation of its first class of students, the 622nd Expeditionary Combat Support-Training and Certification Center because the first organization in the Department of Defense to obtain Professional Truck Drivers Institute certification.

"Now professionally trained, commercially certified and licensed Airmen can transition seamlessly into the civilian workforce," said Maj. Gen. Stayce Harris, 22nd Air Force commander.

The center can train up to 64 Airmen each year.

David Money, member of the PTDI board of directors, expressed the likelihood of employment on the outside world for course graduates.

"We are always looking for good quality drivers," he said. "We always encourage our employers to look for former military members because of their dedication to excellence."

The 622nd continues to seek new ways to improve its training and gain more professional certifications.

"We are currently working toward a crane certification next," said Chief Master Sgt. Trevor Shattuck, career field manager at the Air Force Civil Engineer Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.

Once achieved, the schoolhouse at Dobbins expects approximately 150 students to receive similar accreditation for crane operations.

"We want to try to move these programs into a transition assistance type course before Airmen separate from the military," said Chief Master Sgt. Leonard Howard, the 622nd Expeditionary Combat Support-Training and Certification Center commandant. *(Senior Airman Daniel Phelps, 94th Airlift Wing public affairs, Dobbins ARB.)*

Class Teaches Airmen Better Writing Skills

Nearly 50 Airmen from the 301st Fighter Wing at Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas, attended a writing skills



class to improve their performance report craftsmanship.

"People are very comfortable talking about their strengths, but they're not comfortable in discussing their weaknesses and making themselves more vulnerable," said Senior Master Sgt. Shon Saye, a member of the wing's Human Resources Development Council who spearheaded the class.

Tech. Sgt. Robert Catts, a 301st Communications Squadron network infrastructure technician, attended the writing skills class and found it beneficial.

"The class gave us a lot of useful resources," Catts said. "It was useful to meet the experts and know that we can go to one place to find everything."

Master Sgt. Barbara Therrien, former executive assistant for the 301st Fighter Wing commander, was one of the class speakers. Having reviewed more than 2,000 officer and enlisted performance reports, Therrien gave Airmen insight on some writing pitfalls, such as lack of review and attention to detail.

At least four or five people should review an OPR or EPR to catch errors, she said.

Maj. Kevin Clinton, HRDC co-chairman, understands the far-reaching effects of good writing.

"The EPR/OPR process enables Airmen to highlight their achievements while serving as a vessel to provide valuable feedback to others," Clinton said. "That feedback is critical as we develop today's Airmen for tomorrow's needs."

Improving writing and communication skills can be beneficial in other areas of life, too.

"It helps you as a Reservist in resume writing," Catts said. "An EPR can prove you're a good candidate (for a military position or promotion), but you also have to convince civilian employers that you're good for their positions as well. So the whole exercise of writing good EPRs could be the difference between a \$30,000 job and an \$80,000 job, depending on how you write that resume."

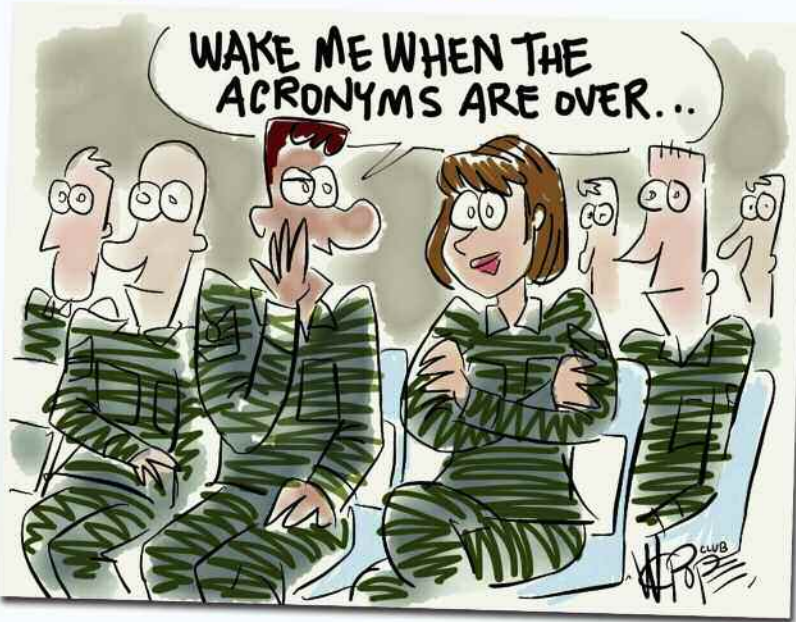
Attendees received numerous writing handouts to assist in honing their skills.

"Our Airmen will carry the tools we teach them to other bases," Clinton said. "So, not only will this class improve the 301st Fighter Wing, it will improve the U.S. Air Force and transfer invaluable skills to our civilian employers."

The idea for the class came about after problems with performance report writing came up during HRDC meetings.

"HRDC wanted to get involved, not to remedy the situation, but to

Pope's Pun



communicate to all of the squadrons and units to say, ‘OK, we’ve got to get a better handle (on this),’” Saye said. “If the HRDC can introduce the wing to the subject-matter experts or just put them in the right hands, then that’s a great start.” (Staff Sgt. Samantha Mathison, 301st FW public affairs)

Boom Operator Develops Unique Fitness Program

A boom operator with the 18th Air Refueling Squadron at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, used his experience as a certified personal trainer and high school football coach to develop a new fitness program and promote healthy lifestyle choices.

Tech. Sgt. Daniel Mills, who formerly served as a member of the active-duty 22nd Medical Group at McConnell, had been training active-duty Airmen for four years before transitioning to the Air Force Reserve a little more than a year ago.

“I started out helping to build workouts for individuals in the 22nd Medical Group who were having trouble passing their fitness tests,” Mills said. “After I transitioned into the Air Force Reserve and the 18th Air Refueling Squadron, a couple of people from the unit approached me about wanting to start working out. It has really caught on within the squadron, and the number of participants has really grown.”

While it’s common for active-duty units to conduct daily workouts, Reserve units typically don’t due to the fact that the majority of the members are civilians during the work week and are only on base during unit training assembly weekends. Mills wanted to provide a daily program for the full-time air reserve technicians and other Reservists who are available to attend as a way to promote both fitness and camaraderie.

“It’s very unique,” said Master Sgt. Jay Guldjord, a boom operator. “I’ve worked with

and been around many other units throughout the Air Force Reserve, and I’ve never personally seen a unit that does daily workouts together. You see it on the active-duty side, of course, but it’s rare to see it being done by Reservists.”

Guldjord said another unique aspect is the workouts are completely optional — no member is forced to attend.

“Most of the time in the military, unit workouts are forced PT (physical training) sessions where everyone is required to be there,” he said. “In this instance, it’s all voluntary. Everyone wants to be there and is going out of their way to build their daily schedule around the workout. I think in that way it’s more effective as both a workout as well as building camaraderie. . . .”

With members of the 18th ARS, like all Reservists, having to balance their civilian, military and family responsibilities, getting together for a daily workout can be a challenge. Mills said members of the squadron constantly com-

municate and flex their schedules in order to get the class in, typically giving up their lunch hour or coming in after the workday to accomplish that day’s training session.

As far as the workouts themselves are concerned, Mills applies his knowledge as a personal trainer to create challenging routines that ensure each member is reaping maximum benefits.

“He’s building a workout regimen that is for all levels of fitness, from people who are already running and working out every day to people who might never go to the gym other than for their annual fitness test,” Guldjord said. “It’s very unique how he has built this program to be adaptable to everyone.”

“Every workout we do is different, and we never do the same workout twice,” Mills said. “Each one incorporates different principles, hits major muscle groups and has cardio built in. We hit the cardio differently. Instead of jumping on a treadmill or elliptical, we do high-intensity intervals where we constantly take the heart rate up and back down. With all of this, everything we do can be modified to the individual fitness level of each person participating so he or she can start at one place and build from there. We ultimately are trying to build a fitness program that guides us toward the total healthy lifestyle we all want.”

Guldjord said the focus on developing and maintaining an overall healthy lifestyle and not just “working out” has had a very positive effect on unit members.

“While we are going through the workout, Tech. Sgt. Mills will be talking to us about diet, checking to see what we are eating and making sure each person is getting proper nutrition,” he said. “He’s helping us to encompass all the different aspects of a healthy lifestyle and teaching individuals how to eat better in order to have a long-lasting effect with the ultimate goal being a positive healthy lifestyle change.”

Mills said his experience as a football coach plays a big role in his ability to inspire his fellow squadron member to accomplish their fitness goals.

“It helps me to know how to motivate people,” he said. “Everyone is motivated differently, and coaching high school football has helped me understand how to help people accomplish what they want to achieve with just a little push in the right direction.”

Guldjord said he’s seen the effectiveness of Mills’ coaching philosophy firsthand.

“He has a unique ability to motivate people to achieve without denigrating them,” he said. “That’s a characteristic few people have; good coaches and trainers have it, and Tech. Sgt. Mills has it. It makes him extremely effective, and we all come away from these daily workouts feeling like we are benefiting, improving and learning every single time.” (Capt. Zach Anderson, 931st Air Refueling Group public affairs)

Simulated Navy Helicopter Deck Landing Pads Save Air Force a Bundle

Airmen from the 45th Space Wing and 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, came up with an innovative solution to a training problem that is expected to result in an annual savings of approximately \$288,000.

In order to practice naval deck landings, HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter pilots from the 920th RQW’s 301st Rescue Squadron were having to travel to an off-site location.

“In the past, the 301st would have to conduct the training at either an offshore aircraft carrier or a naval air station such as Jacksonville Naval Air Station, Florida,” said Capt. Gibson Sprott, 45th Operations Support Squadron airfield operations flight commander.

To eliminate the travel and save money, the two wings got together and decided to paint a pair of deck landing pads on the east-west runway of the Patrick airfield.

“With the painting of the deck landing pads, pilots no longer have to travel to an off-site location to meet their mandatory training,” Sprott said.

While the solution sounds simple, the process to paint the U.S. Navy markings on an Air Force airfield took more than two years to plan, coordinate and execute, the captain said.

The 45th SW airfield management office ensured funding was available from the 920th RQW, secured design approval from Air Force Space Command and determined the proper placement for the landing pads. The project cost a total of \$13,500.

Upon completion of the project, Brig. Gen. Nina Armagno, 45th SW commander, recognized the team involved in the innovative project.

“The Air Force has made an excellent investment that will pay for itself after its second use,” Armagno said. “This is a true success story.” (45th SW public affairs)



Tango Romeo

By Ralph Lunt

The initials of my neighbor — T.R. — inspired this article. Let me explain.

Where I live, we can have traditional cable or one of the bolt-a-satellite-dish-on-your-house options for television service. I got tired of seeing a commercial advertising monthly internet service for \$14.99, while I am paying \$50-plus. I finally had enough of this guy screaming at me about the low cost and called the cable company. In short, they knocked my cost down by \$12.00 a month.

Now, back to Tango Romeo. I live in Cleveland, and we had a record cold winter. Ugh! I made the decision in the fall to keep our thermostat no higher than 68 degrees in hopes of reducing our heating costs. To my dismay, when we received our January bill, it was well north of \$325.00! So I decided to call my neighbors and compare natural gas bills.

I was surprised to find out that many of them were paying roughly half of what I was paying. Enter Tango Romeo. I asked him what his natural gas bill was, and he went on a mission. Turns out, he and I were on an old billing plan and were paying roughly 45 percent more than others in our neighborhood. I called my natural gas company and negotiated a new deal that saved me and Tango Romeo about half of our bill.

My goal for this column is for you to take the time and discover ways in which you can save money. My recent natural gas bill was almost half of what it was the previous month. Check your bills, call your providers and, of course, fly safe!

(Editor’s note: This feature is designed to provide financial advice and information of a general nature. Individuals should conduct their own research and consult a financial adviser before making any financial decisions. Based in Cleveland, Lunt is a certified financial planner and vice president of a financial planning and consulting firm. He is also a colonel in the Air Force Reserve, serving as the reserve forces director of the Great Lakes Region of the Civil Air Patrol adviser’s program.)

Special operations Reservists begin training with new aircraft

By Tech. Sgt. Sam King

The 5th Special Operations Squadron at Duke Field, Florida, added yet another airframe to the list of Air Force Special Operations Command aircraft it uses to train aircrews.

The squadron began training in the C-146A Wolfhound in December at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M. As of early February, the squadron had trained six pilots and four loadmasters.

“The C-146 mission represents a new capacity for the Reserve to continue our Total Force Initiative association with AFSOC active-duty missions,” said Maj. Austin White, 5th SOS Det. 1 commander.

One of the 5th SOS Reservists who is serving as a flight instructor is Maj. Matthew Torney, who was flying F-16s, U-28s and the C-146 on active-duty less than a year ago. He carries a flight skill code that allows him to operate as a mission commander during flights and help the C-146 formal training unit handle an increased student load.

“This is an outstanding example of how the Reserve can utilize an Airman separating from active duty and quickly incorporate him right back into the same mission set with a minimum of training downtime,” White said.

The C-146 is a slightly larger “big brother” to the C-145A that currently occupies the 919th Special Operations Wing flight line at Duke Field. The Wolfhound travels longer distances and lands on longer surfaces. It is faster and has a much higher takeoff weight capacity.

The aircraft will be a new addition to Duke Field in 2015, according to Col. Jim Phillips, 919th SOW commander.

The 49th Special Operations Squadron, a Reserve operational nonstandard aviation squadron, is scheduled to stand up at Duke in the fall and will be exclusively involved in the C-146 mission.

To help alleviate costs associated with sending Reservists to flight training at Cannon AFB, the only location where this training is available, the 5th SOS has procured a C-145/C-146 simulator.

This is a huge help, since the simulator can be used to accomplish



TECH. SGT. JASMIN TAYLOR


A C-146A Wolfhound taxis down the 919th Special Operations Wing flight line at Duke Field, Florida. The 5th Special Operations Squadron began training Reserve and active-duty Airmen in the aircraft in December. A new 919th SOW squadron dedicated to the Wolfhound will stand up later this year.

training for both airframes, White said. It allows students to receive basic flight training without actually having to be in an airplane.

The 5th SOS Reservists provide instruction for the U-28, C-145, C-146, AC-130U and MC-130H with their Total Force Initiative active-duty squadron, the 19th SOS.

“This is a continuation of what the 5th has been doing for the past seven years as a TFI partner to AFSOC and AFSOAWC (Air Force Special Operations Air Warfare Center) to fulfill our mission of training air commandos on special ops platforms,” White said.

(King is assigned to the 919th SOW public affairs office at Duke Field.)



Pararescue jumpers and combat rescue officers from the 920th Rescue Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, conduct search and rescue response training at the Guardian Centers training facility in Perry, Georgia, in March. At the state-of-the-art facility, the Reservists got to take part in ultra-realistic training scenarios involving an earthquake, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, a flood and an active shooter.

Controlled Chaos

Rescue Reservists take realistic training to a new level

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Kelly Goonan

Partially collapsed buildings, dozens of Somali role-players, flooded housing areas, and hundreds of charred and mangled vehicles scattered across 820 acres offered a uniquely realistic training environment for pararescue jumpers and combat rescue officers from the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida.

The Reservists endured the challenging environment to refine their search and rescue skills during an extensive four-day training exercise in March at the Guardian Centers in Perry, Georgia, about 20 miles south of Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command at Robins Air Force Base.

"This facility was really like the Ritz Carlton," said Capt. Ryan Ruddy of Patrick's 308th Rescue Squadron. "We had everything we needed to conduct imperative real-world training in a controlled environment."

According to its website, Guardian Centers is America's premier disaster preparedness and tactical training validation center. Its facilities enable realistic, large-scale disaster response exercises and kinetic military operations training.

"Guardian Centers was conceived, designed and purpose built to help first responders from different agencies work together to act swiftly and decisively in times of crisis," the website says.

Controlled chaos ensued as the Guardian Centers staff created a Hurricane Katrina-like flood scenario calling for two HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters to circle overhead and lower PJs down to rooftops below to extract victims and cut open roofs to save those inside the flooded building.

"It was a great opportunity to use the tools we have, see how they work and provide feedback," said Staff Sgt. Carl Enis, 308th pararescue jumper. "We learned quickly that some tools work better than others, depending on the type of roof we're cutting into."

Another natural disaster scenario necessitated diverse response techniques as a simulated earthquake destroyed a U.S. Embassy in Somalia. The PJs were confronted with disgruntled Somali-speaking citizens, gunfire and mass confusion outside the partially collapsed, smoke-filled building. Inside, the Reservists found victims pinned by huge chunks of cement and requiring medical care.

The final training scenario involved a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device that detonated within a small city in Somalia. Joining the Reservists and their helicopters for this training opportunity were Marines operating two MV-22 Ospreys used to transport the pararescue Airmen into and out of the disaster zone.

Burning rubber and vehicles filled the air with foul odors as disheveled citizens roamed the debris-filled road after the explosion went off. In addition, sounds of gunshots filled the air in between helicopter passes. PJs quickly organized and evaluated the scene. They were forced to cut into vehicles to extract the injured and dead. The narrow road, filled with broken pieces of vehicles and shattered glass, required the PJs to use their all-terrain vehicles to quickly and safely move the victims from the chaotic scene to the helicopters for extraction.

"This was the first time I've trained alongside Air Force pararescue and Army special forces," said Staff Sgt. Kyle Storm, 273rd Marine Wing Support Squadron explosive ordnance disposal technician. "Watching these elite groups conduct missions together in such a realistic training environment was a great experience."

(Goonan is assigned to the 439th Airlift Wing public affairs office at Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts. She wrote this story while on a temporary duty assignment to the HQ AFRC public affairs office at Robins AFB.)



Master Sgt. Bill Allen, 301st Rescue Squadron aerial gunner, checks for obstacles as his HH-60 Pave Hawk prepares to land during one portion of the training exercise.



Reserve PJs extract victims from a rooftop during the Hurricane Katrina-like flood scenario.



308th RQS pararescue jumper Tech. Sgt. Nicholas Torres (right) helps Master Sgt. David Drury, also from the 308th, during the simulated earthquake scenario.



Master Sgt. Christopher Lais, 308th RQS, administers care during the mass casualty portion of the training exercise.

[Profiles in Leadership]

This photo illustration shows two sides of Col. Chris Cunningham — the Air Force Reservist who currently serves as the emergency preparedness liaison officer for Indiana and the civilian employee who is currently a procurement manager for a large multinational publishing and information company.

Whether it's as a Reservist or a civilian employee in the corporate world, Chris Cunningham has found success by

Putting Quality First

(Editor's note: This story is part of a regular series of articles that highlight the unique capabilities Air Force Reservists bring to the fight every day. Make sure to check out future issues of the magazine for more Profiles in Leadership.)

By Bo Joyner

Like most Air Force Reservists, Col. Chris Cunningham is a busy man. In his civilian life, he's a procurement manager for Reed Elsevier, a large multinational publishing and information company. For the Reserve, he's the emergency preparedness liaison officer for the state of Indiana. At home, he's a husband and the father of three children, with one in college and two in high school. Sometimes it doesn't seem like there are enough hours in the day to do everything that needs to get done, but somehow Cunningham makes it work.

A 1990 graduate of The Citadel with a degree in electrical engineering, Cunningham was an active-duty Air Force civil engineer for 7 1/2 years before making the switch to the Air Force Reserve in 1998.

"My last active-duty assignment was at Wright-Patterson (Air Force Base, Ohio), and when I got off active duty, I joined the (Reserve's) 445th Civil Engineer Squadron right away," he said. "I was with the 445th for 14 years and finished my time there as the commander."

He left that assignment two years ago to accept an individual mobilization augmentee position as the EPLO for Indiana. EPLOs serve as conduits for information during natural or man-made disasters when the Department of Defense has been called in by the Federal Emergency Management Agency or another primary federal

agency in support of a state. When disaster strikes and local and state officials look to the federal government for help, EPLOs quickly go to work behind the scenes as part of the DOD response effort.

"EPLOs keep a close eye on what is happening whenever there is a disaster and are ready to step in when asked," Cunningham said. "The DOD is the last resort. Local city or county officials will try to deal with the situation first. If they get overwhelmed, they will go to the state and ask for help. If the state officials get overwhelmed, they will ask another state for help. Finally, they may ask the federal government for assistance, and that's when the EPLO would step in to coordinate DOD response to the disaster."

Cunningham believes his Reserve experience as the commander of a civil engineer squadron and his civilian experience with companies like IBM and General Electric have prepared him well for his role as an EPLO.

For both GE and IBM, Cunningham was a Six Sigma black belt, meaning he spent nearly 100 percent of his time working to identify and remove the causes of defects and improving the manufacturing and business processes at these two Fortune 500 companies.

"I basically did Six Sigma full time at GE and IBM for five years," he said. "And it really changed the way I think about everything I do. The biggest thing with Six Sigma is you really try to understand what is going on in the current situation and document it to the best extent possible. You look for the real root causes of a shortcoming or a defect, not necessarily what you think might be the real issue. You put data behind it, and then you fix it. Measuring everything you do is

huge with Six Sigma. And it's really a great way to take defects out of a process."

Cunningham is not a full-time Six Sigma champion at Reed Elsevier, but what he learned as a black belt at GE and IBM certainly influences the work he does for his current employer.

"Reed Elsevier is a huge umbrella that is made up of a lot of different companies," he said. "We are big in publishing and information management, and it's my job to help make sure our products get from point A to point B on time. Of course, our print volume is going down, but the electronic side of our business is going up. My challenge is to make sure our distribution is where it should be at a time when the world is transitioning from a print-dominated format to a more electronic-dominated format. And there are certainly some things I learned from Six Sigma that apply to my current position."

The colonel said he has also been able to apply Six Sigma concepts in his Reserve life.

"I used Six Sigma quite a bit when I was the commander of the 445th CES," Cunningham said. "While we were doing Six Sigma in the business world, the Air Force was working with Total Quality Management, and there are some similarities between the two. I remember one weekend we used some survey tools to try to ascertain what was most important to our members. We were trying to prioritize what we wanted to work on the next year, and we really wanted to hear from the Airmen what was important to them. We used Six Sigma tools to find the voice of the customer so we could set our priorities."

Having experienced success in both private business and the military, Cunningham has some advice for leaders at all levels in the Air Force Reserve:

Be yourself

"I've seen a lot of leaders over the years who tried to act how they thought a leader should act, even if it was totally out of character for them. For example, if you're naturally a quiet person, don't try to be a yeller. And vice versa. People see right through that. The biggest thing is to be yourself and play to your strengths."

Pretend your parents are in the room

"One thing I learned at The Citadel that has stayed with me is to always interact with people like their parents were standing behind them and my parents were standing behind me. If somebody needs counseling, it can be handled in a professional way where your parents would be proud of the way you handled it, and their parents would understand as well."

Focus on fitness

"This one is simple: The commander should be one of the fittest people in the unit. Set the example for your people. It's tough to send a message to your troops that physical fitness is important if you aren't fit yourself."

Create a safe working environment

"One of the things I always tried to do as a commander was to make sure we had a safe working environment, and not just safe from an OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) perspective. Of course keeping things safe from a physical perspective is extremely important, but it's also important that your people feel comfortable at work and feel like they are part of the team. The workplace

needs to be free of abuse, free of ridicule, free of teasing. The people who work for you may not like work because it's work, but it shouldn't be because we have created some sort of hostile environment."

Make time for mentoring

"Finding that one person you can bounce ideas off of is important, whether he or she is higher ranking or lower ranking than you. As you gain rank, you need to reach down into the unit and make sure your better young officers and NCOs have everything they need to move up into leadership positions."

Think diversity

"Always look for diverse opinions. Get input from people who don't look like you. As a commander, I always tried to get the female perspective, the African American perspective. We all make up the Air Force, and we all bring different perspectives to the table. Anything you can do to get to a better decision is always worth it."

Communication is key

"Let both sides know what is going on in the other world. I try to keep my civilian bosses up on everything that is going on the Reserve, and I definitely want my Reserve bosses to know what is going on in my civilian life. Bad news doesn't age well. If you have a deployment coming up, let your bosses know as soon as possible. Communication is also extremely important with your family and part of that is making sure they are informed of your comings and goings. If you're going to the base, bring the family along so they can see what you do. It's the same in the business world: include your family whenever you can."

Encourage the crossover

"Take the knowledge you learn from one job and apply it to your other job. If you learn Six Sigma in your civilian job, apply it to your military job. If you learn leadership in the military and how to stand in front of a group of 100 people, certainly use that in your civilian world as well. Take advantage of training whenever you can on both the civilian and Reserve side, and let what you learn cross over whenever you can."

Do your homework

"Keep up with your Reserve stuff throughout the month. You can't not do anything in between UTAs (unit training assemblies). Especially as a senior leader, you can't just come in on the weekend and pick up where you left off last time. There is too much going on. You have to keep up with what is going on with big Air Force, you have to keep up with e-mails, OPRs (officer performance reports), EPRs (enlisted performance reports). There is no way to get everything done on a UTA, so do what you can throughout the month at home."

Beware the break in service

"My last piece of advice is to active-duty service members who are thinking about becoming a Reservist: That one weekend a month and two weeks a year will be hard to grab once you go off active duty if you don't make the switch to the Reserve right away. If you go straight away into the Reserve, the commitment is there. It's not impossible, but it will be definitely more difficult if you wait a few years before becoming a Reservist."

Resurrecting the

GHOST RIDER

Total Force team takes B-52 from the 'Boneyard' to Barksdale

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Greg Steele

After almost seven years of slumber, a sleeping giant awakened in the Arizona desert and took flight once again Feb. 13 as it continued on its historic journey to resume the mission for which it was created: providing strategic long-range bomber support anywhere in the world, at any time.

The B-52 Stratofortress known as "Ghost Rider" was destined for Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, where the restoration process will continue until the aircraft is ready to go back into service. It had been sitting in storage under the care of the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, since 2008, when it was retired from the fleet. Ghost Rider is the first B-52 that the Air Force has resurrected from long-term storage at the "Boneyard" and returned to duty.

Ghost Rider will replace another bomber at Barksdale that was damaged by a fire during maintenance. Air Force officials said it is more economical to restore Ghost Rider back to service than to repair the damaged aircraft.

"It was chosen after thorough inspections and extensive engineering analysis," said Capt. Chuck McLeod of the B-52 System Project Office at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma. Although well preserved, McLeod said the blazing-hot Arizona sun took its toll on the dormant aircraft, bleaching sections of its exposed aluminum skin almost white and causing the tires and major fuel lines to dry rot.

According to Tech. Sgt. Stephen Sorge, a fuels specialist from the Air Force Reserve's 307th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Barksdale AFB, the most challenging part of the project was replacing all the fuel bladders and lines.

"Our first engine start was a sight to see," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Cocran, a crew chief in the 2nd AMXS, an active-duty unit at Barksdale. "Out of the exhaust came a black cloud of smoke, then a huge flame as it roared to life."

The first taxi of Ghost Rider down the runway occurred

on the day prior to its flight to Barksdale and was a critical test of the steering capability of the landing gear. Crew members needed to ensure that after years sitting idle in the desert, the aircraft could be safely controlled down the runway.

On hand to marshal the aircraft from its parking spot to the taxiway for the flight to Barksdale was 80-year-old Air Force veteran Jerry Fugere. A native of Tucson, Arizona, Fugere was assigned to Homestead AFB, Florida, back in 1962 when Ghost Rider arrived from the Boeing assembly line with just 17 flying hours. He became the aircraft's first crew chief.

"Every time I came on base, I would see her sitting out in the field, and she would bring back a swell of fond memories," Fugere said. "Then one day (in late 2014), I looked out there and she was gone."

Little did he know that Ghost Rider had been towed to a spot on the flight line to start the regeneration process that would bring his old friend back to life.

"Everyone in our group agreed Mr. Fugere should be given the honor once again to marshal his jet into history," said Senior Master Sgt. Gavin Smith, 307th AMXS.

The aircraft rumbled down the runway and took to the sky as if the years of a stagnant life in the Arizona desert had never happened.

Surprisingly, instead of an air of celebration, the mood was somber as Ghost Rider climbed into the sky and disappeared out of sight. Smith pulled out his phone and made the call everyone back at Barksdale had been waiting to hear: "Aircraft 61-007 is airborne."

Because a B-52 had never before been put back into service from storage, Air Force Global Strike Command projected the project would take 90 days. The Total Force team did it in a little more than 70 days.

"This was a joint maintenance endeavor between Air Force Global Strike Command, the B-52 System Program Office, AMARG and Air Force Reserve Command," said Chief Master Sgt. Steve Vogle, AFGSC B-52 weapons sys-



Maintenance technicians tow a B-52 Stratofortress from a maintenance area at the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The aircraft, known as "Ghost Rider," is being returned to active service after sitting in storage since 2008 when it was decommissioned and sent to the "Boneyard."

tem team chief. "This is another fine example of the Air Force's Total Force enterprise working together and achieving another first in bomber history."

The flight crew was carefully picked to ensure they were well prepared to handle any potential adversity on the flight to Barksdale.

"I've been flying B-52s since the '80s, and it surprised me that after almost seven years she cranked up just fine, and we had no issues with the flight control systems," said Col. Keith Schultz, 307th Operations Group commander, who piloted Ghost Rider on its historic flight. With more than 6,500 flying hours, Schultz is the most experienced B-52 pilot in the Air Force. "It took a little under three hours for the flight, and we were fortunate to have had good weather the entire trip as the inertial and navigational equipment had not been installed."

"This aircraft has made it through Jerry Fugere's career, through the twilight of my career, and it could very well perform through these young maintainers' careers who brought her back to life," he said.

(Steele is assigned to the 93rd Bombardment Squadron at Barksdale AFB.)



Col. Keith Schultz, 307th Operations Group commander, greets Jerry Fugere before taking flight in the Ghost Rider. Fugere was the aircraft's first crew chief and was given the honor of marshaling the jet from its parking spot to the taxiway.



Master Sgt. Steve Vance, 307th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, disconnects a tow bar from the B-52H Stratofortress after towing it to a parking spot on the flight line at Davis-Monthan.

Navigating a Course to Better Training

Hurricane Hunters investigate options at Kirtland Air Force Base

By Maj. Marnee A.C. Losurdo

Being the only weather reconnaissance squadron in the Department of Defense providing surveillance of tropical storms and hurricanes for the National Hurricane Center can present some unique challenges — like how to accomplish aircrew training.

A quest for improved WC-130J combat systems operator training led the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, part of the 403rd Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, to visit the 58th Training Squadron's C-130J Center of Excellence at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, in January.

The Center of Excellence is the only schoolhouse in the Air Force that offers C-130J CSO, or navigator, training. It trains Air Force special operations and combat search and rescue aircrews, offering more than 100 courses in 18 different crew positions to include pilots, loadmasters and CSOs. It was the organization's CSO course that prompted the 53rd WRS to investigate future training opportunities at Kirtland, said Lt. Col. Matthew Muha, squadron commander and navigator.

All special-mission C-130s have navigators because of the workload the special systems require. While a typical C-130J crew consists of two pilots and a loadmaster, a WC-130J Hurricane Hunter aircrew consists of five positions: pilot, co-pilot, aerial weather reconnaissance officer, load-

master and combat systems operator or navigator. For the weather mission, CSOs prepare weather recon mission plans, use navigational equipment to locate and penetrate tropical cyclones, and use radar to avoid areas of extreme weather in a storm.

"Sometimes it takes two pilots just to fly the plane in very severe weather, so the navigator is guiding us through the least severe of the severe weather," said Lt. Col. Keith Gibson, 53rd WRS director of operations and pilot.

Currently, 53d WRS pilots and loadmasters go through their initial C-130J training at the 314th Airlift Wing's tactical airlift Center of Excellence at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas. CSOs from the 53d WRS have no external formal school, so they train in-house at Keesler.

"When our pilots and loadmasters go to Little Rock for initial and mission qualification, the CSO is not part of the crew. This is a disadvantage for not only the CSO, but also the pilots and loadmasters since they don't have a CSO on the crew for their initial training in the C-130J," said Muha, adding that the squadron has an Air Education and Training Command-approved syllabus for specialized mission training for CSOs and ARWOs. "An advantage of training our CSOs at the 58th is they would get to train with pilots and loadmasters as a crew. This will make all crew positions more accustomed to working together as a team, which greatly improves crew resource management."

Another advantage of training at Kirtland would be the availability of simulator training, Gibson said. CSOs currently conduct all training in the actual WC-130J aircraft during flight.

"It's a lot cheaper to train personnel on a simulator versus during an actual mission," Gibson said. "With a simulator, trainers can create different environments such as day, night, high-level, low-level and bad weather to force the crews to work together in those situations. We can't create bad weather. So when our CSOs train for the weather mission, it is real-world."

53rd WRS officials originally visited Kirtland in November to investigate training options for their CSOs, but while there they discovered the school also has courses that may benefit other crewmembers, which prompted the visit in January.

The group of nine Hurricane Hunters received an overview of the school, a tour of training devices, to include simulators, and engaged in in-depth discussions with wing, group and squadron leadership about the potential for WC-130J training at Kirtland.

"The training they offer here is also excellent for pilots and loadmasters, but it is undetermined if it's more appropriate than what is already provided at Little Rock," said Col. David J. Condit, 403rd Operations Group commander and navigator. "There may also be some potential for aircraft systems training for ARWOs who also have to do all of their training in-house at the squadron."

(Losurdo is chief of public affairs for the 403rd WG at Keesler AFB.)

The 53rd WRS at a Glance

The 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, a component of the 403rd Wing located at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, is a one-of-a-kind organization. It is the only operational unit in the world flying weather reconnaissance on a routine basis.

The mission of the Hurricane Hunters is to recruit, organize and train assigned personnel to perform aerial weather reconnaissance. Members of the squadron provide surveillance of tropical storms and hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and the central Pacific Ocean for the National Hurricane Center in Miami. They also fly winter storm missions off both coasts of the United States.

The 53rd WRS is authorized 20 aircrews. Fifty-nine unit members hold air reserve technician positions. The rest of the squadron is made up of traditional Reservists.

WC-130Js carry a basic crew of five: a pilot, co-pilot, navigator, flight meteorologist and weather reconnaissance loadmaster. The pilot, who serves as the aircraft commander, and the co-pilot man the flight controls. The navigator keeps track of the aircraft's position and movement, and monitors radar to avoid tornadic activity. The flight meteorologist acts as flight director and observes and records meteorological data at flight level using a computer that encodes weather data every 30 seconds. The weather reconnaissance loadmaster collects and records vertical meteorological data using a parachute-borne sensor known as a dropsonde. It measures and encodes weather data down to the ocean surface.



YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD

Thirty-four years after she graduated high school, Dover Reservist completes CCAF, becomes first in family with college degree

By Master Sgt. Veronica Aceveda

Thirty-four years after graduating from high school, Tech. Sgt. Melena Quetel became the first of 11 children in her family to receive a college degree Dec. 6 during a Community College of the Air Force graduation ceremony at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware.

"There's no such thing as being too old; you're never too old to learn," declared the 46th Aerial Port Squadron Reservist.

Quetel and her 10 siblings were raised in a working-class family in the suburbs of Cincinnati. Upon graduating from high school in 1980, she said it was understood her parents couldn't afford to send her to college, especially with four younger siblings still at home.

"My grades weren't good enough for a scholarship, and I didn't want to go into debt," said Quetel, who joined the Air Force at age 19.

Her father was a lithographer, who served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. He was initially against

Quetel's military aspirations.

"At the time, he felt the service was no place for a woman; but, for as long as I can remember, I've wanted to be in the Air Force," said Quetel, who served 12 years on active duty.

"When I joined, the Air Force was only 11 percent women, and very few jobs were available to women," she said. "But, I set my mind to it and went for it."

Due to the limited number of career field choices, Quetel served nearly a year in the Delayed Enlistment Program. Once she arrived in Texas for basic military training, she said she loved it.

"It was more privacy than I had ever had," Quetel said. "I had my own bed, my own locker and my own clothes: no hand-me-downs. And, I didn't have to stand in line for the bathroom."

During BMT, Quetel met the man, Joseph, who would later become her current husband. The two cryptological linguist recruits were both shifted to become parachute and fabrication specialists. After technical training, they parted ways and began separate Air Force lives.

While stationed at her first assignment in Japan in the early 1980s, Quetel said she doesn't remember hearing much about the CCAF program. While she was interested in furthering her education, she said it took a back seat to marriage and starting a family.

By the time she reached her second duty station — Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana — in 1986, she had three small children. It was while at Barksdale that she first learned about the CCAF and began taking college classes using tuition assistance from the Air Force.

During a return assignment to Japan in 1989, Quetel completed a couple more classes but had to pause for life stressors, which left her as a single parent. As her enlistment contract dwindled, Quetel's final assignment was closer to her family in Ohio, at Wright-Patterson AFB.

"As much as I wanted to go to school, there was no time and definitely no money," said Quetel, who separated from active duty in 1991.

A short time later and 10 years after first meeting, Quetel and Joseph, who was serving on active duty in North Carolina, reconnected and married. For 11 years, Quetel was a stay-at-home mom, who endured three permanent changes of station and five deployments as a military spouse.

When her youngest son joined the Marine Corps in 2003, she said she began entertaining the idea of returning to military service herself. The next year, she enlisted as a transportation specialist with the Air Force Reserve's

46th APS at Dover.

With their children out of the nest, she and her husband both deployed to Kuwait in 2006.

In her late 40s, Quetel's husband retired, and she cross-trained into the education and training career field, also keeping busy with various volunteer organizations.

"I thought about it all the time," said Quetel with regard to finishing school. "I just felt I never had the time to pursue it."

She said it wasn't until 2010 that she started looking at the possibility of taking some classes but was still skeptical about being able to juggle her responsibilities. With some mentoring and encouragement from a co-worker, Quetel said she was inspired to begin again. Her leap began with a visit to the Education and Training Office.

"Mr. John Young was very instrumental in helping me understand how many credits I needed for my CCAF and what classes I needed to take to fulfill those requirements," Quetel said. "He also coached me in the creation of my degree plan."

At the beginning of 2013, Quetel, a grandmother of two, needed 11 credits to earn an associate degree in her secondary career field of transportation. With a renewed sense of motivation, Quetel enrolled in college through a local university's satellite office.

The college student, now in her 50s, took a class after work twice a week and participated in a lunchtime class three times a week. She also took a hybrid course, where she said she even did classwork at 6 a.m. in her pajamas.

"I really nailed down the process," Quetel said. "And, as my unit's training manager, I have used my experience to help guide others in my unit toward their CCAF."

Quetel was one of seven aerial porters honored in the 2014 CCAF graduating class at Dover. Her husband and eldest son's family attended the event. Her parents, who are in their 80s, traveled from Ohio to see their daughter be presented with not one but two associate degrees. One was awarded in transportation and the other in education and training.

Col. Raymond A. Kozak, 512th Airlift Wing commander, presented Quetel her degrees on stage and then addressed the graduates and the audience.

"Lifelong learning is about getting better all the time," he said. "By you receiving these degrees in these major areas of study, it increases our strategic agility in the best Air Force in the world."

After the ceremony, Quetel's mother, Rose Linz, smiled

In association with Air University, the Community College of the Air Force offers two-year associate of applied science degrees in

5 Broad Career Areas



with 67 Specific Degree Programs



Aircraft and Missile Maintenance



Allied Health



Electronics and Telecommunications



Logistics and Resources



Public and Support Services



Then Airman Basic Melena Quetel, who's currently the 46th Aerial Port Squadron education and training manager, stands in front of a static aircraft on Chanute Air Force Base, Illinois, where she attended technical training as a parachute and fabrication specialist. On Dec. 6, 2014, Quetel became the first of 11 children in her family to earn a college degree, a feat made possible through the Community College of the Air Force.

with pride and said she wished her daughter's entire family from Ohio could have been there for the event.

"She set out to prove she could do this, and she did," Linz said.

Quetel's father, who long ago changed his perception of women in the military, beamed with pride and applauded his daughter's efforts, made possible through the Air Force.

"Earning my CCAF degree was almost free," she said. "It wasn't a loan, it was a gift. And, who wouldn't want that? I regret not making the time to pursue my degree sooner. I feel more confident and accomplished, plus I've increased my future promotion potential. The Air Force has been good to me."

With 20 years of combined active-duty and Reserve time, Quetel can add another first to her sibling rivalry. She was the first sibling to join the military, the first to visit a foreign country and now the first to get a degree.

"I've done a lot of firsts for being a number seven," she said with a grin.

(Aceveda is assigned to the 512th Airlift Wing public affairs office at Dover AFB.)

The Air Force Responds

Service disagrees with one key commission recommendation

The Air Force issued an official response to the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force report to Congress in March, supporting most of its recommendations and only disagreeing with one.

Of the commission's 42 recommendations, the Air Force is already in the process of implementing 25 and is developing plans or pilot programs for another 16.

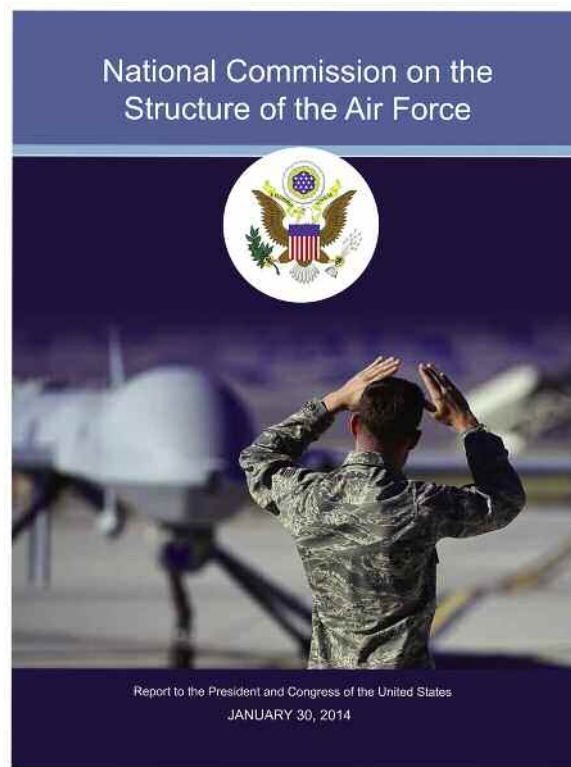
"The Air Force welcomes, and will continue to support, congressional review of our total force," said Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James. "The body of work that came out of the commission will help us advance the ball toward an even stronger total force, and I'm convinced the future of the Air Force includes a greater reliance on our Guard and Reserve components."

The commission's only recommendation that the Air Force disagreed with is the one that disestablishes Air Force Reserve Command. Elimination of AFRC would not result in substantial savings, as nine different major commands would have to assume the roles and responsibilities currently accomplished by one. Additionally, the current structure allows the chief of Air Force Reserve to manage AFR authorized and appropriated resources as required by key statutory obligations.

Over the last two years, the Air Force has made significant progress toward improving collaboration and cooperation between the components to strengthen and institutionalize relationships across the total force. All three components have participated in the Air Force's budgetary discussions and planning from start to finish beginning with the fiscal year 2015 president's budget. This process enables an integrated approach to maximize capability and capacity in times of increasing fiscal constraints.

"No one is more invested in total force integration than the Air Force," said Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, chief of Air Force Reserve and AFRC commander. "Going forward, there is no doubt that our Air Force is going to rely more, not less, on our Reserve and National Guard forces. It is essential to leverage our reserve components more effectively in the current global security environment."

The Air Force has spent the last year thoroughly analyzing



The Air Force disagrees with the National Commission of the Structure of the Air Force's recommendation to disestablish Air Force Reserve Command.

80 percent of the Air Force mission-sets, taking a close look at its active-component and reserve-component balance. Over the course of the next year, the Air Force will continue evaluating the remaining 20 percent of the mission areas, as well as re-looking at major mission areas that need further examination.

"The evolution of our total force over the years is a great success story, but much of that story has yet to be written," said Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, Air Force chief of staff. "We need to be as good at the headquarters level as our Airmen are at the operational and tactical levels. Those Airmen, who've been fighting side by side for years, don't see the difference between an active component member, a Guardsman or a Reservist. And those who benefit from American airpower really don't care. They just know that without it ... you lose."

Congress established the NCSAF in 2013 to determine how the Air Force's structure should be modified to best fill current and future mission requirements. The commission first presented its findings on Capitol Hill in January 2014. During the same period, the Air Force initiated a comprehensive review of the Air Force total force enterprise.

Upon completion of the Air Force's internal review and the commission's report, the Air Force established the Total Force Continuum, an organization led by a brigadier general from each component. The continuum is charged with pursuing legislative, policy, educational, operational and organizational changes to more fully integrate the three components into "one Air Force" and identifying the optimal balance of active, Guard and Reserve across all mission sets. Subsequent recommendations continuing the Air Force's efforts at integrating across the components will be presented in future budget proposals.

"One unified Air Force needs to be the way we do business without even thinking about it," said Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III, director of the Air National Guard. "We are committed to ensuring we evolve in our total force integration with a synchronized team always ready to deliver unparalleled airpower anywhere in the world."

(Secretary of the Air Force public affairs)



Upcoming training camp prepares Reservists for worldwide competition

Reservists from around the world will meet in Washington, D.C., in July for the annual Congress of the Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers. In conjunction with the NATO-associated event, known by its French initials CIOR, will be a competition involving three-person teams participating in running, swimming and shooting events.

"Contrary to the title, the competition is open to all ranks," said retired Air Force Reserve Col. Chuck Ferguson, who participated in the competition for nine years. Ferguson twice led his team to gold in the veteran category, and he now coaches orienteering for the CIOR training camp.

The U.S. training camp for this year's event begins July 5 at Camp Johnson in Burlington, Vermont. Members of the team will be selected July 19, and the competition will take place July 24-31.

Competitors from a dozen or more countries will compete in male and female novice, experienced and veteran categories, Ferguson said. Events begin with all members of the team shooting the host-nation's military pistol and rifle. Day two has the teams completing a 500-meter obstacle course followed by a challenging 50-meter swimming obstacle course — in uniform. Ferguson said day three features a combat first-aid test just prior to a 15-kilometer orienteering race.

Candidates, who are all unit-funded, will report to Camp Johnson July 5 and run a five-mile time trial on Monday. The two-week CIOR training camp, which features world-class instruction in shooting and orienteering, is complemented by

plenty of training on the running and swimming obstacle courses.

All candidates learn military skills relevant to today's battlefield, running the gamut from small unit leadership to self-aid and buddy care, and "shoot, move, communicate," Ferguson said.

"Most importantly, joint service and multinational training and competition lead to invaluable lifelong contacts and friendships," he said. "These range from other U.S. reserve forces to NATO competitors as well as those from Finland, Austria and South Africa. Such contacts and friendships can prove invaluable in the ever-increasing joint service and multinational world arena."

Ferguson said the Air Force Reserve has a long and proud history of successful CIOR competitors, going back as far as 1972. More recently, a U.S. team comprising three Air Force Reservists — Col. Scott Banning, Maj. Mike Masuda, and Staff Sgt. Matt Gaddy — won the gold medal in Germany in the novice category in 2014. Ferguson said they came from behind to overtake a first-place German team in the orienteering event on the last day of the competition.

Complete information, including a training manual, descriptions and videos of the events, and the application process, is available online at <http://teamusamilitary.org/Home.php>. Also, Air Force Reservists interested in participating in the training camp may contact Ferguson via email at usofrn@cox.net.

(Staff reports)



Airmen from Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, and the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center build, test and evaluate the Transport Isolation System aboard C-17 Globemaster III aircraft.

A BETTER WAY

Charleston Reservists help test new system for transporting patients with contagious and infectious diseases

Story By Michael Dukes; photos by Airman 1st Class Taylor Queen

Members of the 315th Airlift Wing at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, were part of a team that was involved in initial testing of a new system for transporting patients suffering from contagious and infectious diseases aboard Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircraft.

The Transportation Isolation System was developed rapidly during last year's deadly outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa. It is designed to provide aeromedical evacuation for patients with known or suspected exposure to a contagious or infectious disease while protecting the aircraft, aircrew and support personnel.

Aeromedical perspective

"My involvement and training on the TIS was that of a very unique and rewarding experience, not to mention an honor to have such an opportunity to do so," said Master Sgt. Pamela Evanosky, 315th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron aeromed-

ical technician.

Evanosky said the training and testing of the TIS was unlike anything she had experienced before.

"Its capabilities and what it can provide for our troops and Department of Defense members is something I feel we have needed for a very, very long time," the sergeant said.

Evanosky is no stranger to providing medical support to infectious patients while on aeromedical missions. She deployed to Japan a few years back during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome crisis.

"If we had had the capabilities of the TIS back then, I think the transport of any patient, regardless of illness or disease, would have been no problem at all and would have occurred in the safest environment possible," Evanosky said.

"After receiving the new training and being involved with the testing of the TIS, I am fully confident and would step up to the plate anytime and anywhere to transport a highly contagious patient, regardless if it is either an airborne illness or

an Ebola patient," she said. "The reason for my self-confidence is that the TIS will deliver the capability to transport multiple patients while providing a negative-pressure environment within the aircraft and the room to provide safe medical care in flight regardless of the situation. I can exit and enter the TIS when needed because it's been designed to allow me to do so per the highest Centers for Disease Control standards and regulations."

Evanosky said that in the long run she sees TIS capability as a significant advantage for the aeromedical evacuation mission and "will certainly offset the specialized future challenges in assuring the proper care is administered to those who are in need."

Loadmaster perspective

Chief Master Sgt. Bryan DuBois of the 317th Airlift Squadron at Charleston served as the lead loadmaster during the TIS testing. He said the testing posed many unique challenges.

"The program was completed at an accelerated rate," DuBois

said. "All of the team members worked diligently to make sure nothing was overlooked. For the loadmasters, the [TIS] unit was essentially just like any other cargo on a pallet that would be locked into the rails system.

"We worked through various scenarios to make sure we could load the unit in various configurations from all the cargo-loading equipment available. We were also instrumental in helping connect the unit to all of the aircraft systems for lighting and oxygen."

The chief said having access to the different members of the team gave the loadmasters the opportunity to learn from people they don't normally come in contact with.

"This gave loadmasters the background behind this system and how it works," DuBois said. "From what I observed, there is no doubt in my mind this system will protect the aircrews from the infected patients. Throughout the test flight, everything for the loadmasters worked as advertised with the system."

DuBois said he jumped at the opportunity to be part of the initial TIS test team.

"When I first heard of this system, I was very eager to help



Capt. Gerald Ubaka, 315th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron flight nurse, takes part in testing the Transport Isolation System.

out in any way I could,” he said. “The magnitude of what this system means to those patients infected with diseases who need to get to a medical facility is huge.

“The time I gave is minimal when you think of the impact this system will have on others. This system is on the leading edge of technology and adds another dimension to the capabilities of the C-17 and other mobility airlift forces assets.”

System specifics

The TIS, manufactured by Production Products Inc. of St. Louis, is based on existing military support pallets. Each unit has a disposable liner supported by a metal structure and an air filtration system. The TIS maintains negative interior pressure to keep contaminants inside the chamber. An alarm sounds if negative pressure is lost.

The TIS is a modular, buildable system capable of transport-

ing up to three litter patients or four ambulatory patients in each module. This modular system allows for flexibility with various patient configurations. The standard configuration is for two seats and one litter. A C-17 can carry three full TIS units.

According to U.S. Transportation Command, the Department of Defense has ordered 25 systems, with delivery expected in March. Charleston received the first two systems for training and staging. Additional staging locations will be developed after delivery and based on ongoing world events.

Since DOD efforts to support of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa began last year, 315th AW aircrews have flown more than a dozen missions, delivering more than 200 people and 737.4 short tons of cargo to the region. To date, the Air Force has not transported any patients suspected of having Ebola from the region.

(Dukes is assigned to the 315th AW public affairs office at Joint Base Charleston.)



The TIS is a self-contained module system that can be used with either two or three sections, depending on aircraft space. It allows for the safe transport of patients with an infectious disease.

Lt. Col. (Dr.) Shahin Etebar, a member of the 482nd Medical Squadron, Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida, is one of only two neuroscientists in the Air Force Reserve.

My Proudest Accomplishment

**Wearing the Air Force uniform tops the list
for one of the nation’s premier neurosurgeons**
Maj. Brooke Cortez

Once a month, all over the world, Reservists set aside their civilian lives to serve their country.

For one of the top neuroscientists in the country, service to his country is his proudest accomplishment.

“I’ve had a lot of academic accomplishments, awards and degrees, but the proudest day of my life was when I could put on this uniform,” said Lt. Col. (Dr.) Shahin Etebar, a member of the 482nd Medical Squadron at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida.

In his civilian career, Etebar serves as the director of the Desert Spine and Neurosurgical Institute in Rancho Mirage, California. With 15 years of experience in minimally invasive and complex spinal surgery, his special interests include spinal reconstruction due to failed surgery, cancer and trauma.

Originally from Iran, his family came to the United States as refugees in 1979.

“We were there until six months after the Iranian Revolution,” he said. “They were going to come after my family over ties with the American consul, so we came to California.”

Etebar has had the itch to serve since graduating from the University of California, Irvine, yet his path didn’t lead him to the Air Force until 2012.

“About four years ago, I was reassessing my life, asking myself what I hadn’t accomplished that I wanted to accomplish,” he said. “I started a mid-sized neuroscience medical group and was chief of medical staff, but I was not fulfilled.”

He said the turning point that led him to join the Air Force Reserve occurred while touring the U.S. Marine Corps’ Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California.

“I take care of a lot of wounded warriors, and through their families, I got a tour at Twentynine Palms,” he said. “I was so impressed by these kids, the same age as my children, who were so gung-ho, ready to go out and put their lives on the line. I was

inspired. ... I was sitting here not doing anything, so I called a colleague who is a neurosurgeon in the Air Force, and he put me in touch with a recruiter.”

Etebar said his experience in Iran also impacted his commitment to serve.

“People die every day for the freedoms that people here take for granted,” he said. “Coming from that environment, having seen a lot of people die fighting for their freedom, profoundly impacted me when I came to this country and was granted every freedom guaranteed by the Constitution. No one in my family ever fought for that, and no one from my family died for it. It was just given to us.”

Serving as a member of the 482nd Fighter Wing is a fulfilling experience and duty, Etebar said.

“There is a lot of camaraderie in this unit. ... we are very cohesive and share the same commitment to service and to excellence,” he said.

Back in California at the medical institute, his medical partners work to ensure care is provided to his patients while he is serving his country.

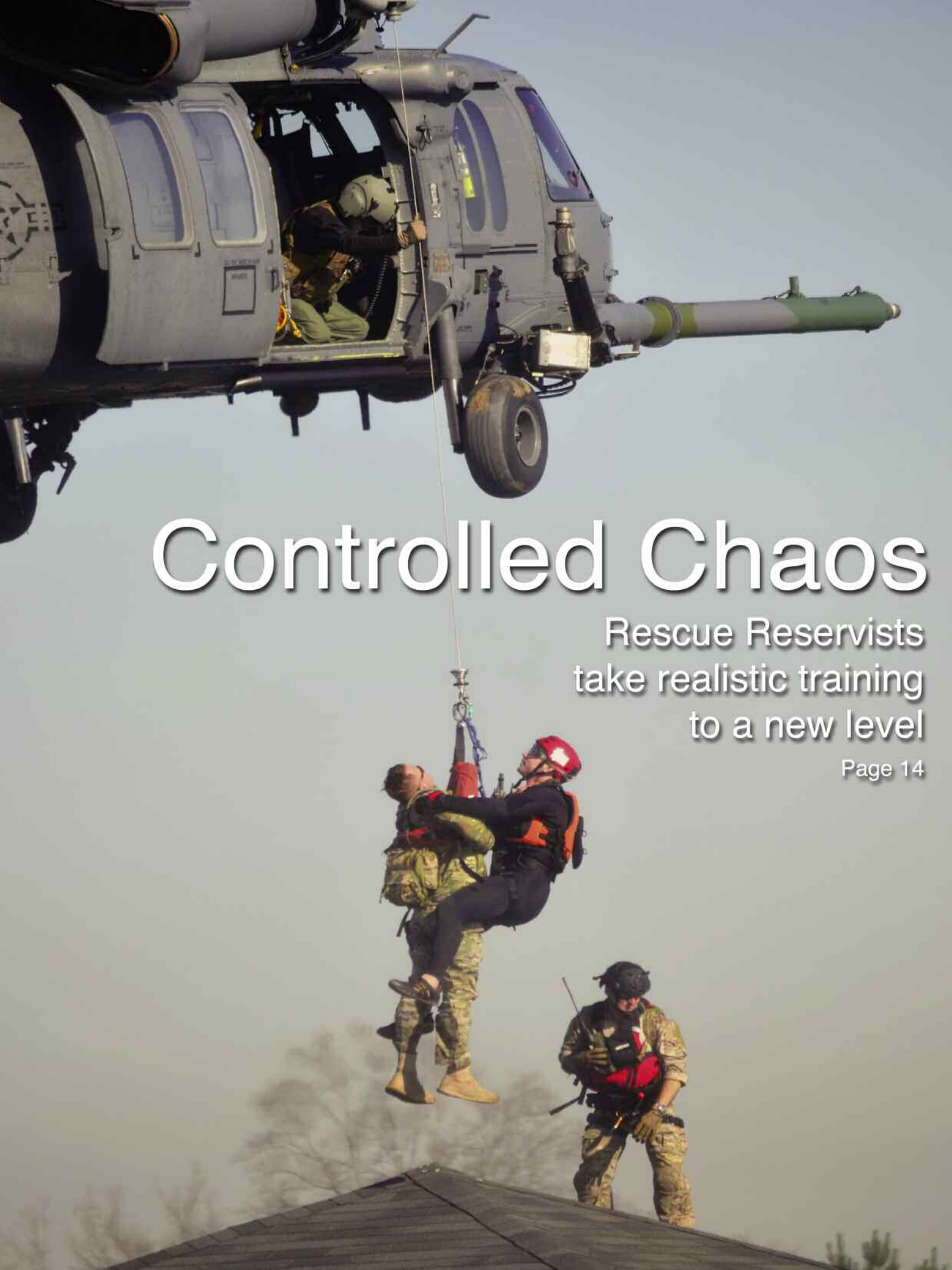
“My partners are great. ... they are very understanding,” Etebar said. “They cover my calls while I’m out here (in Florida), and we rearrange our schedules so that I can attend training.”

As F-16 Fighting Falcons roared down the runway in the distance and the medical clinic’s intercom buzzed with the drill weekend activity, Etebar smiled as he spoke of how honored he is to serve.

“I’m very proud, and I think everyone at the squadron here knows that,” he said. “When I’m back at the hospital, I tell everyone and try to get people to join up, too.”

Serving as one of the only two neuroscientists in the Reserve, Etebar has his sights set next on becoming a flight surgeon.

(Cortez is chief of public affairs for the 482nd Fighter Wing at Homestead ARB.)



Controlled Chaos

Rescue Reservists
take realistic training
to a new level

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